

TOP SECRET

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GENERAL

1. Bidault believes fear of Communist China will influence Soviet position at Geneva:

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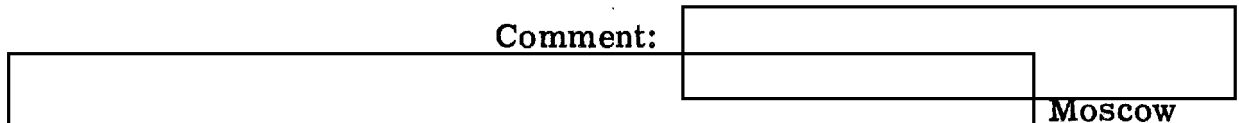
French foreign minister Bidault on 25 March outlined to Ambassador Dillon his "general impression" of probable Soviet positions at Geneva. Bidault said his views were based on a 24 March interview with Soviet ambassador Vinogradov. The Soviet ambassador made no attempt to connect the Geneva conference with EDC.

Bidault believes the Soviet leaders are "deeply afraid" that Communist China will "drag them into an adventure" and are, therefore, "really desirous of achieving peace, or at least a cease-fire, in Indochina." For these reasons, the Soviet delegation at Geneva will be "hoping for United States assistance in controlling Communist China."

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Comment:

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Moscow and Peiping appear to be in substantial agreement on the Far Eastern Communist program and on their respective roles in it. Since mid-1951, this program has not called for aggressive military ventures of the Korean type.

The USSR and China seem confident that the Communists are in a position to demand a high price for ending the Indochina war and that continued military pressure will eventually force the French to take the initiative in making a truce offer to the Viet Minh.

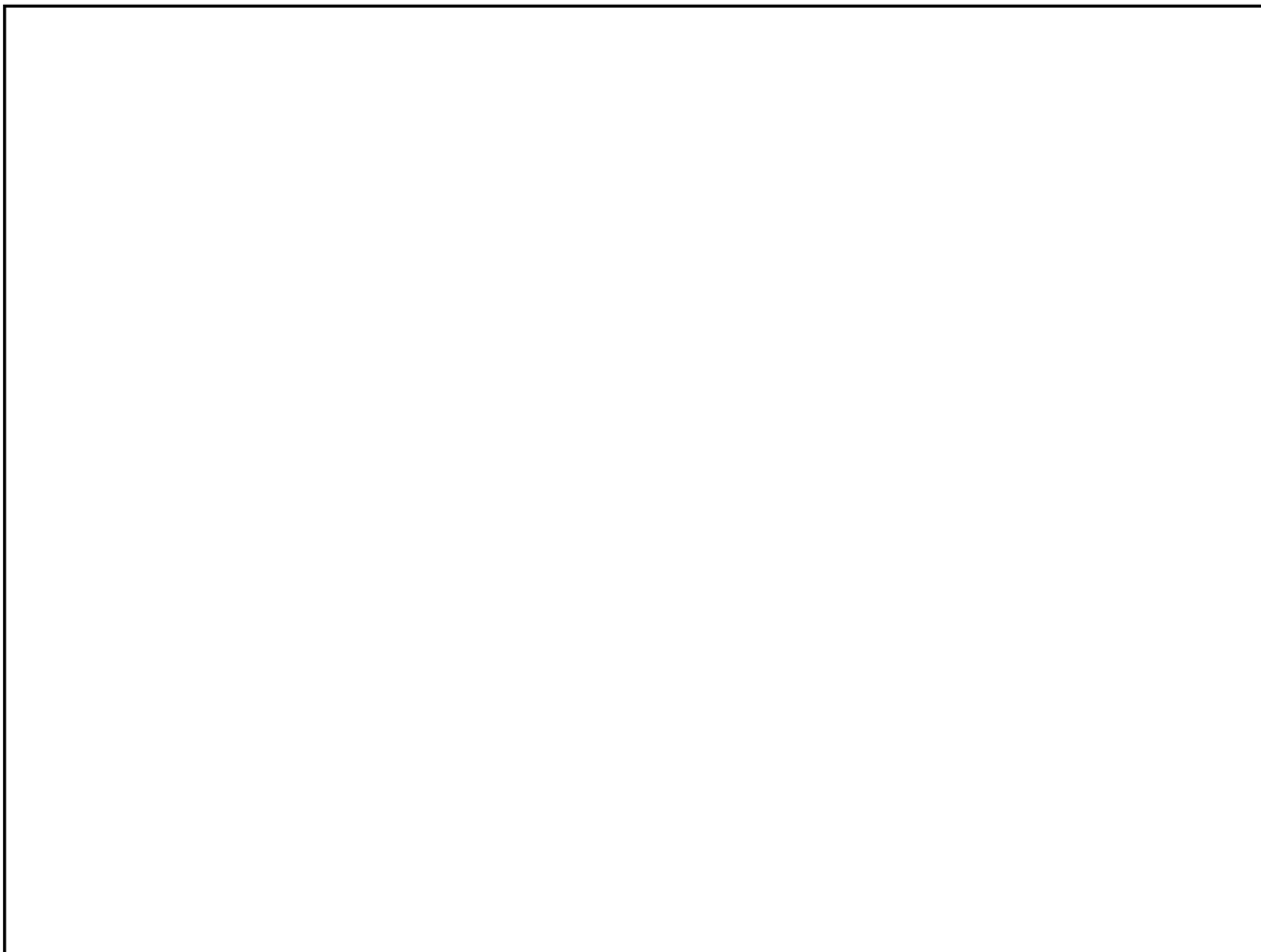
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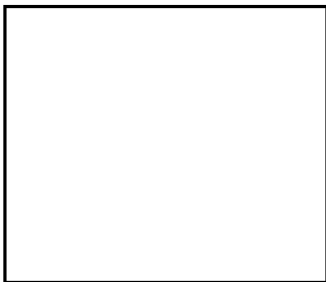
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SOUTHEAST ASIA

3. Heavy increase in Viet Minh troops inside delta reported:

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The assistant American army attaché in Hanoi reports that all major Viet Minh units recently deployed around the Tonkin delta defense perimeter are now inside. Enemy activity has increased sharply in the last two weeks.

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Certain Viet Minh regional companies are being deployed to cut roads along the Hanoi-Haiphong route. [redacted]

[redacted] the enemy proposes to give these units further

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training and save the regular battalions for a more important mission, probably an attempt to isolate Hanoi in conjunction with a major attack on Dien Bien Phu.

Comment: This report indicates that the enemy now has about 20,000 regulars inside the delta perimeter, as compared to the approximately 13,000 recently reported. The enemy also has some 55,000 auxiliary troops inside the perimeter.

The Viet Minh attacks on Tonkin airfields shortly before the assault on Dien Bien Phu provide evidence that the enemy's activity in the delta is closely coordinated with its plans for Dien Bien Phu.

SOUTH ASIA

4. Turkish-Pakistani defense agreement ready for signature:

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Turkey's Foreign Ministry has agreed to all textual changes suggested by Pakistan in the defense pact between the two countries, and hopes that the Pakistani foreign minister will come to Ankara to sign the agreement within a few days. If this is not possible, the Turks propose to authorize their ambassador in Karachi to sign, since they believe immediate action is essential.

Comment: Turkey's readiness to sign the agreement at once suggests that Ankara has not been frightened off by the Karachi government's defeat in the recent East Pakistan elections. Immediate signature would obviate delays that might ensue should Pakistan become temporarily preoccupied by domestic political problems posed by these elections.

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7. Ambassador Caffery's analysis of situation in Cairo:

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Ambassador Caffery suggests that it was only to avoid grave unrest and possible civil war that the Nasr-dominated Revolutionary Command Council yielded to Nagib's desire for an early return to political activity.

The RCC hopes that its capitulation on the issues of political parties and elections will create an atmosphere in which a settlement on Suez is possible. The RCC also feels that its prestige will be restored and even enhanced by a settlement.

Nagib has demonstrated his willingness "to play along with the worst elements in the country, including the Wafdists, the Moslem Brotherhood and the Communists," in order to stay in power.

Comment: This analysis, in line with late press reports, suggests that Nagib retains the initiative. An intensive struggle for power continues, and it seems that extremist elements have an opportunity to enter the picture. Such a development would further delay -- and impair the chances of success for -- a Suez settlement.

WESTERN EUROPE

8. Paris embassy believes Laniel government could survive fall of Dien Bien Phu:

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The American embassy in Paris does not believe that the loss of Dien Bien Phu would result in the fall of the Laniel government or a French call for immediate negotiations with the Viet Minh.

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The embassy supports its view by citing such factors as the imminence of the Geneva talks and the wish of National Assembly deputies to avoid the risk of dissolution and new elections at this time. Furthermore, it doubts that an assembly majority could be found in favor of immediate negotiations with the Viet Minh. A defeat at Dien Bien Phu would, however, severely shock French public opinion.

Comment: Premier Laniel is reported to be increasingly optimistic about the whole Indochina situation. He told Ambassador Dillon on 23 March that defeatism in France has now considerably abated.

LATIN AMERICA

9. Reported Cuban revolt scheme includes Batista's assassination:

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[REDACTED] The perennial rumors of revolt in Cuba have now been reinforced by a report from the American base at Guantanamo that trouble is imminent, according to the American embassy in Havana. It is now rumored that ousted president Prio will return and that revolutionaries will wipe out the entire Batista family, "even to the cat."

The embassy notes that since 20 March the Cuban navy has been on special alert. Control over land and sea traffic, particularly in Havana and in Oriente province, has been tightened.

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